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Essays of Shakespeare





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New History
from

Mrs. Bingham

On her 70th birthday

Echoes of Peace.

BY

HELEN F. BOYDEN.



G L. SHEARER,

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

TO MY KIND,
FAITHFUL, AND ALWAYS HELPFUL FRIEND,
MISS JULIA HASKELL,
CLEVELAND, OHIO,
THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

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ECHOES OF PEACE.

Along the Line.

I WONDER if some heaven-sent thought
Thrilled you to-day. Perhaps it brought
A new, sweet light ; then send it on
To help some other groping one
Along the line.

Through weary, starless nights of pain
We may have passed, but not in vain ;
Some bitter lesson leaves its sweet
'T will help another to repeat
Along the line.

The echoing cadence of a hymn,
A picture's beauty, grand though dim,
The fragrance of a winter flower—
Let them renew their magic power
Along the line.

How many lips have never trilled
The song with which your soul is filled ;
Then boldly, gladly tell it out,
And make it one triumphant shout
Along the line.

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A smile an answering smile will bring;
 A hand-clasp—'t is a little thing;
 A word of cheer, of love, of praise;
 Yet only these some soul may raise
 Along the line.

Pass it along—the watchword—brother;
 Hand clasping hand, touch one another;
 Send up the praise, the trustful prayer;
 Send out your love for all to share
 Along the line.

His Will Concerning Me.

WHEN jarred with all the change and fret of life,
 With human wills and purposes at strife,
 I find a wondrous calm in that "retreat,"
 The Most High's "secret place," and learn how sweet
 His will concerning me.

Though foes may threaten and the world revile,
 My strength and refuge are the Father's smile.
 Though heart and flesh can see a thousand harms,
 Yet underneath are "Everlasting Arms"—
 His will concerning me.

Black clouds of ill may hide me from his face,
 And still to contrite souls he giveth grace;
 The tempest's mutterings all the air may fill,
 Yet through the storm I hear his "Peace, be still!"—
 His will concerning me.

A "child" and "heir," a "daughter of the King,"
 "His own peculiar treasure," anything
 That touches me, the "apple of his eye,"
 Has touched him also who for me did die.

His will concerning me.

And trusting "in the covert of his wings,"
 A hymn of praise my soul eternal sings;
 Through rivers or through fire, secure from harm,
 For with my name is written on his palm

His will concerning me.

"His will"—oh, blessed fulness of his grace!—
 Is that I may behold him face to face.

"That ye may be with me," our Saviour said,
 And feast for aye upon that heavenly Bread,

His will concerning us.

Dear Father, now my waiting spirit bless;
 Help me to walk in faith and holiness;
 I yield to thee my heart, my will, my powers;
 Reveal to me through all life's waiting hours

Thy will concerning me.

Planning.

"GOD'S PLANS, LIKE LILIES, PURE AND WHITE UNFOLD."

IT sometimes frets me just to know
 That plans I dreamingly had wrought
 Beneath His sun dissolve like snow,
 And at the noonday turn to naught.

So hard to know, "T was so we meant ;"
But ah ! it happens otherwise ;
So hard to feel—and be content—
Each day slip by in new surprise.

A backward glance is painless now ;
I grieve not that I onetime grieved ;
To-day a humble head I bow
For blessings yesterday received.

But yet the future is so dim ;
The present doth not satisfy :
Can I repose my trust on Him,
Sure that He will not " pass me by " ?

O doubting soul ! 'T is hard to lay
With passive will my hand in His ;
So hard to suffer much to-day,
And trust him for my future bliss !

How hard ! So much I 'd planned and told
For those sweet summer days of rest ;
And now the season has grown old,
And I—am I much better blest ?

Ay ! Empty dreams a pleasure leave ;
'T is sweet to feel, " It might have been ;"
A memory thrills me while I grieve,
And joy throbs in each secret pain.

Perhaps I 've lost a pleasing friend,
Have lost some hours I cherished dear,
Have lost—God knows how I would end !—
Yet I have gained a hope more clear.

And so I am content to know
His careful thought for me is such
That he would purify me, so
I might be sure he loved me much.

A Prayer.

ENTER our hearts, O Lord; we need
No good beside;
May they from all things else be freed,
But thou abide!

Open our lips, O Lord, to speak
For thee alone
Words to the poor, the low, the weak,
To every one!

Make us to see, O Lord, and so
That others, blind,
May knowledge take of us, and go
Their sight to find!

Touch thou our ears, O Lord, to hear
And understand
The joys awaiting those that ne'er
Let go thy hand!

Bless thou our hands, O Lord, to do
Thy service sweet,
Tireless until our gifts we strew
Before thy feet!

Hasten our feet, O Lord, on deeds
Of mercy sent:
Thy love and grace are priceless meeds
For labor spent!

May heart and thought and speech and will
Thy message bear,
And praising fill our lives until
We're "over there"!

TWO LESSONS.

"**L**ORD, Lord," I cried, "the road is rough,
The way is dark and long and steep!
Can I not show my love enough
If by the wayside I should keep,
Or here or there a resting-place
To pause and praise thee for thy grace?"

"For in the valley lies my past,
And bright were hopes that cheered me there;
But, oh! the future is so vast,
And I am weary—hear my prayer!
A footsore wanderer, I plead;
Bless me and give my present need."

The answer came, though soft and low:
"Daughter, I know thy needs the best;
Lean thou upon my breast, and so
Thou'lt find the true abiding rest.
Now, with thy hand in mine, press on.
Thou only weary art alone;

“For thou canst walk and weary not
If in my strength thou trustest well;
And, with thy every pain forgot,
Canst run and still thy story tell.
This lesson hold throughout the race:
The Lord will give sufficient grace.”

How glorious it was—how true!
When on his errands I could run,
Each day of serving was a new
And precious song of praise begun;
And harder, heavier the task,
For greater work my tongue would ask.

And then a harder thing he taught;
For in my most triumphant hour
He made my whole life's work of naught,
And laid me low beneath his power;
There, in my weakness and my pain,
He came to hold converse again.

“O Lord, I long to serve thee so!
Wilt thou not raise me from my bed?”
“Nay, till the lesson thou dost know,
And patient learn to wait, instead
Of serving; let the two combine,
And fear not, child, for thou art mine!

“I taught thee how to walk and run,
To glory in thy work for me;
But then the teaching was not done—
Thou didst it oft impatiently;

All need to learn, in work so great,
To gladly run—and then to wait.”

“Yea, Lord, I trust me to thy will,”
I said at last, “though hard it be.”
And then the voice replied, “Be still;
I am thy God; trust perfectly;
For strength to serve me will I send,
And grace to wait unto the end.”

Under the Snow of Life.

WHAT is there waiting us under the snow—
Under the snow of life?

Pulses fast beating and bosoms aglow,
Hearts by the breath of some frost laid low,
Hopes that were blighted in some long ago—
Under the snow of life.

Brush it off carefully. What do we find
Under the snow of life?
Memories rankling of words unkind,
Acts that could never quite pass out of mind,
Misunderstandings—oh, we were so blind!—
Under the snow of life.

Let us break down a barrier so cold;
Under the snow of life
Reach out your hand with love true and bold,
All of your life and your longings unfold;
Joy and your measure of joy you shall hold
Under the snow of life.\

Chilling the mantle ! Oh, cast it aside.

Under the snow of life
Walk with your fellows, disrobed of your pride ;
Speak in the need ; no tenderness hide ;
Close, oh, keep close to those at your side,
Under the snow of life !

Wearisome longing and taunting regret,
Under the snow of life,
Quiver in hearts that cannot forget.
Trifles ? Yes, sometimes, we fancy, and yet
Ever some sorrowful cheek is wet
Under the snow of life.

Drifting through silence and sound and space,
O thou snow of life,
Would we could banish from earth thy trace ;
Then would we see, standing face to face,
Then would we rest in His infinite grace,
Finding no snow of life !

Oh, we remember some brows grown cold,
Chilled by the snow of life !
How we have watched them slip from our hold,
Silently, sweetly, with grief untold,
Thinking they *must* come back as of old,
Under the snow of life !

On through the mist and the gray-hued frost,
Past the snow of life,
Shines through the darkness a starry host,
Guiding us on to the nearing coast
Where before us so many have passed
Into the sun of life.

A Fragment.

IT IS hard sometimes to feel the touch
Of wisdom, guiding us aright,
And oft because we lack our sight ;
We fancy that they matter much,
These little things forgot at night.

“ God knows I sorrowed once.” Ah, well,
It is the common cry of each,
And mingles in our daily speech ;
But some time we can calmly tell
How such things passed out from our reach.

And when we sum up life at last,
And fold our hands to pray ere sleep,
Like children “ that the Lord would keep,”
We ’ll feel his strong love overcast,
And bless his mercy sure and deep.

A Thought.

NOT something new, for all new things are old,
But just the better knowing what I knew.
It came when evening’s wings the earth enfold,
And stars peep through ;

When, ’neath the ever-watching eyes of God,
I stood and gazed upon our baby’s face,
Counting the charms of this young womanhood
And every grace.

"She trusts me," with great tenderness I said,
Remembering how the child had begged all day,
"Hauntie, me too; oh, 'es, me mus' be led:
'Et 's go and pay."

"Of such"—I never saw so plain before!
We need to beg and to entreat to win
The gracious holding of the Saviour's hand,
Secure from sin.

To trust—not only where the way is old,
Or where we fancy flowers and grasses grow,
But anywhere, just so his hand we hold,
We love him so.

Oh, childish faith! believing every hurt
Is healed by loving kisses! Oh, that we
Would in our wounds his loving power assert,
Cured perfectly!

She thinks she is so wise, and gravely shakes
Her head o'er every baby thought expressed;
How it reminds us of our own mistakes,
All unconfessed!

And yet I love the more because she needs
Such constant watch to keep from harm and ill:
And so God loves, and knowing all our deeds,
Forgives us still.

"Become as little children," One hath said.
Ay, Lord, I would, e'en as this little child,
Clinging to thee in helplessness and faith,
As pure and mild.

So I to-night this single prayer would breathe:
God keep my darling—keep from pain and wrong;
And may thy blessed love our lives enwreathe
And bind us strong!

Look On and Up.

O DEAR heart, leave
Thy needless idling in the fragrant vales,
Nor longer grieve
Because thou canst not broken faiths retrieve;
See, o'er the eastern plains the glory pales!

Lift up thine eye!
High on the mountain-side rare flowers upstart;
Before thee lie,
Above the level of the plain swept eye,
A thousand treasures for thy fainting heart.

The winding way,
With perilous steeps, thy weary soul appalls;
But toil and pray,
And o'er the rocks will creep the break of day;
A guiding Hand will save from pits and falls.

With longer strides
Thy mates may scale the steeps and pass thee by;
Still there abides
One Friend to succor thee, whate'er betides,
Who feels thy pains and heeds thy faintest cry.

All cannot gain
The top, nor need we hope its heights to reach ;
Yet not in vain
Is *any* struggle that our hopes attain ;
Whispers prevail sometimes o'er sounding speech.

A little lay
May echo down the slopes and reach the ear
Of one astray,
Leading him safely to a better way ;
A word may ease a load—a smile give cheer.

Oh, listen ! sweet
A strain of song comes floating through the sky ;
Echoes repeat,
“ Do what thou *canst* in hours so few and fleet,
And peace, like heavenly dew, shall round thee lie.

“ Be strong in hope,
And pierce with steadfast faith the lowering sky ;
Oh, bravely cope
With tempest's wrath and wild and rocky scope ;
Bright day will dawn upon thee by-and-by !”

This Year.

WHAT will it bring,
The year just dawning on our view ?
Will roses strew our path, or rue ?
And will the days seem old or new ?

What will it bring?

The days stretch far away; we mean
To crowd so much—so much—between,
Living in hope the time unseen.

What will it bring?

Oh, let our past, a feeble glow,
Help us from height to height to go
On to the pure eternal snow!

What shall we give?

Hands are outstretched on every side,
And many are the wants and wide.
What can we throw into the tide?

What shall we give?

Such little things fill up our thought,
And awkwardly our hands have wrought
What seems thereafter to be naught.

What shall we give?

No costly gift or fragrant spice;
Some humble token must suffice—
A thing of love and not of price.

What shall we give?

A breath to fame? a smile to art?
Better!—a consecrated heart,
From earth and all its toils apart.

What shall we give,

Fit for eternity and time?
A life where heart and soul make rhyme,
A character for God—sublime.

But I have Prayed.

"SIMON, BEHOLD SATAN HATH DESIRED TO HAVE YOU, . . .
BUT I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE, THAT THY FAITH FAIL
NOT."—LUKE 22:31.

HOW many Simons there have been
Who need so sorely to be kept;
Who, falling often into sin,
Sad tears of penitence have wept.
Poor trembling souls, doubting, dismayed,
They long to hear, "Child, I have prayed."
And why not? For no heart can know
The wondrous love our Lord doth bear;
He knoweth all the ways we go,
Our every joy and grief to share;
Hear down the silence tenderly,
"Fear not, for I have prayed for thee."
Cheer up, sad heart, grow strong in faith;
Cling, cling unto his promised word.
"Lo, I am with you," Jesus saith;
"Be still and know that I am God."
Of Satan's wiles be not afraid,
Though he deceives you—"I have prayed."
Yet strange the path, and oft our prayers,
So weak and faithless, seem in vain,
And days are full of fears and snares;
But closer come, and claim again
The sweet assurance for you made:
"Thou shalt not fail, for I have prayed."

E'en though you sink beneath the waves,
Send out the cry, "Come, help me, Lord ;"
The gentle Saviour stoops and saves
With gentle chide, "Know that my word
Is true, O thou of little faith ;
Doubt not, but claim my power till death."

Have you denied him, you who vowed
To follow in his path alway ?
Are you a "stranger" in the crowd ?
Yet see ! His face is turned this way,
And grieving eyes, so full of love,
His mercy and his pardon prove.

O Simon, Simon, rash of speech,
But filled with love and earnest zeal,
Satan is ever within reach,
Desiring all thy heart to steal ;
But trust—look up—be not afraid,
For "thou art mine," and "I have prayed."

The Idle Hour.

SOME one has said that, "labor as we will,
Some task unfinished lies."
Well, be it so. There comes unto me still
The time when weary eyes
And aching head and heavy heart
Can spend the idle hour apart.

A rest hour? Scarcely; restless hands and will
Are fretting at delay,
And many things that might its leisure fill
Seem gone astray.
I needs must go and sit apart,
Communing with a lonely heart.

Old memories fill the vision—old-time dreams,
A pain with every thought;
I must forget; the load too heavy seems;
My heart is overwrought.
Lord, help me give this hour to thee
And use it for eternity!

Apart with Jesus! Let me feel it so;
And learning at his feet
That which shall set my heart and life aglow
And make another's sweet,
Through kindly thought or prayer of mine,
Thus leading to the life divine.

The idle hour, made sacred to His using
Who gives all time to us,
Not spent in folly or in quiet musing,
But filled with *Him*, and thus
Made brighter with the holy light
That comes from dwelling in his sight.

Some famished heart would come to life again
With just one loving smile,
And fevered lips are moaning of their pain.
Go, comfort them a while;

Speak kindly to the tempted ; know
The burden of thy neighbor's woe !
The hour may haply find me far from all
Who need my ministry.
Then may some prayer of mine in blessing fall
On some one dear to me,
And may the messages I send
Bring gladness to the absent friend.
And so, when hands are free and work and care
Are lifted for a while,
Let me make that a time of earnest prayer,
That God may on me smile
And help me make that hour of rest
To me and all around me blest !

Little Allie.

(TO HER MOTHER.)

“SHE is not dead, but sleepeth,” said
Our blessed Lord in days of old ;
And I entreat you in his stead,
Sad heart, that you this comfort hold ;
For those whom tenderly he would keep
He touches, and they fall asleep.
The soft blue eyes are covered now
By waxen lids ; with simple grace
The hair is drawn back from the brow ;
A smile rests on the childish face ;
Lightly, as if perchance in prayer,
The hands are folded, small and fair.

How tenderly she led the way
To keep our Nellie out of ill !
She knew her slightest wish away,
And held in check the baby will,
And planned to keep the brown eyes bright
And naught but cunning smiles in sight.

Wise little friend ! Our baby grew
As well as we to trust her love ;
But oh, we never, never knew
How soon they needed her above !
We thought we had the right to keep ;
She weary grew and fell asleep.

Poor Nellie, in her lonely play,
Grieving so oft, " Wont Allie tum ?"
Has drawn us to your grief to-day,
To think upon your sorrowing home,
For, heart to heart together grown,
You do not sorrow on alone.

You long to feel again the touch
Of rosy lips against your face,
And know your darling loves you much ;
Oh, but to see her in her place,
To hear her voice but once again ;
We almost seem to hear—in vain !

In vain ? Nay, 't is the Master's will
That you should see her *evermore*.
He'd have you love and cherish still ;
Dear friend, she's only gone before ;
A little time, or more or less,
Then you shall wake in blessedness.

Dead? Hush! a whisper in the air,
A rustle as of angel wings.
See how she slumbers, calm and fair!
Grieve not; the pang of earthly things
Lasts only through the twilight gray,
And in the morning fades away.

'T is very dark this twilight gloom,
And silent, silent everywhere.
How empty seems your every room;
Yet, hush now, for a Form is there,
The nail-pierced Saviour at thy side!
"Lo, I will ever here abide."

What love shines through his tender eyes!
He speaks, and lo, a wondrous calm!
"It all is well, my child; arise;
Lean thou upon my restful arm;
Do well thy duty, ask not, 'Why?'
For *all things* shall thy Lord supply."

Coming Home.

"GOOD-BY, good-by!" 'T was even gayly said;
No thought of long, long parting or of change;
And yet, before six months their way had sped,
'T was "coming home" to faces sad and strange,
And pitying glances and a darkened room;
Within my mother lay, the lovelit eye
Fast fading, and with death's gray gloom,
And life slow ebbing with each labored sigh.

Once more—once more the tired lips would speak,
And gasped, “ I want to tell ”—but told no more ;
The palsied tongue had failed, life is so weak,
And this was nearing fast another shore.
Neighbor and kin stood, in the early morn,
Alone with clay, the image of our love ;
But in our midst an angel had been born,
“ Most blessed ” made, “ exceeding glad ” above.

How strange, strange, strange ! So lately here and
ours,

Now one of those who see Him face to face ;
Since last we heard her speak we count the hours,
But now an angel's tongue bespeaks His grace
Oh, that keen sorrow, mixed with joy and awe,
The sense of loss and yet of countless gain ;
And Memory and Love their pictures draw,
That bring a throb of pleasure—and of pain.

But best I love to dwell upon that day
When I surprised her kneeling by our bed,
Sister's and mine ; and when she went away
I found a dent made in the snowy spread ;
And ever after, though I never knew
What hours she passed there, yet I never missed
The dent—the imprint of the hands so true
And weary head, that on the bedding pressed.

Methinks that other eyes were watching too,
That angels told the story of the dent,
And when she came to heaven's dazzling view,
She knew its mission and was well content.

Surely the story of a well-spent life
Is only meagre if we stop it where
The soul is struggling in its daily strife,
And lose the calm, the victory of prayer.

We do not think of faults or virtues when
The long, long silence finds us quite alone,
But only of the place unfilled again :
We treasure all, the every word and tone.
And so of her who gave me birth I spare
Just this one view, and you will know I meant
The whole sweet, patient lifetime to leave bare,
Because I give—*the story of the dent.*

Gone Home.

PAUSE while you pass through the wards to-day,
Lingering here and there to smile
Courage and hope in the faces that lay
So strangely wan and thin, the while
Your ears with stories I beguile.

Fold down the sheet from this face so cold.
Yes, he has gone ; but listen yet.
He went last night, with my hand in his hold,
His voice in prayer, his eyelids wet
With tears of thankfulness and regret.

Only two weeks ago was the first,
The first he folded his hands to pray ;
You 'd think of all life his was the worst

To hear him; but the clouds broke way,
And peace came in his heart alway.

And, after that, I often heard
His feeble voice in prayer and song,
And sometimes, passing, caught the words,
And knew his life would not be long;
But with its ebb his love grew strong.

But sometimes he would fret to know
That all his past had been in sin,
And longed to work for Jesus so,
Praying that e'er he entered in
He yet some soul from death might win.

His prayer was granted: one that lay
Beside his bed with tears he sought
To join him in the better way;
And by his earnestness he brought
Repentance—and the change was wrought.

Oh, life so short! how can we span
Such things by days and weeks of time—
The glorious mystery of His plan,
His working out through sense and time
The touch that makes all things sublime?

In two short weeks the glad new birth,
And then the gift, a soul to shine
And star his crown; two weeks of earth,
Then heaven to ope, and One divine
To say, "This jewel shall be mine!"

Gone home! Oh, blessed word! gone home,
With all the sinful past wiped out!
No more can pain or sorrow come;
Farewell to longing and to doubt;
"Redeemed—two souls!" the angels shout.

In Christ.

"FOR HE SATISFIETH THE LONGING SOUL AND FILLETH
THE HUNGRY SOUL WITH GOODNESS."—PSA. 107:9.

"IN the world and yet not of it"—
Sweetly follow Christ's command;
In the midst, yet far above it,
Reaching upward for His hand;
Oh, what joy in each surprise,
For His fulness satisfies!

"In the world" shall troubles meet you,
Woe and trials all around,
But his promises shall greet you
And his love shall more abound.
He has overcome; arise!
For his strengthening satisfies.

"In the world," perchance so weary
Of its mocking emptiness,
Turning from a pathway dreary
With beseeching prayer to bless.
Let his tender word suffice,
"Child, my presence satisfies."

"In the world and yet not of it;
Let the Father's love abide.
"In the world," ye must not love it;
Let no cares your hearts divide;
Press on ever for the prize;
God's "high calling" satisfies.

"In the world;" O Master, teach us
All that thou wouldst have us do;
May thy every blessing reach us,
Prove us loyal, brave, and true.
All that evil powers devise
Fails; thy keeping satisfies.

"In the world," yet soon to leave it;
Teach thy will concerning all;
Open hearts, Lord, to receive it!
Soon shall come thy last sweet call,
And beholding with our eyes,
Lord, thy beauty satisfies!

Shining for Jesus.

"HOW can you shine, dear child," I said,
"And be God's little light?"
She gravely shook her golden head
And dropped her eyes so bright.
"We have no light," she said. "Oh, no,
We cannot shine, I'm sure."
"Ah, but he calls us lights, you know."
She raised her eyes so pure

And fixed them on the sky in thought,
And then her face was lit
With beauty from the heavens caught—
“Yes, mamma, this is it.

“I’ll make my eyes so big and bright
And full of Christ, you see,
That they will help to make it light
All round to you and me.

“And then I’ll help the neighbors all,
And so I’ll try to do;
To see the Jesus-light and call
To have him light them too.

“Perhaps the stars are angel-eyes;
And when we pray at night,
We should look upward to the skies
To get ours lighted bright.

“But anyway I mean to pray
To God who makes them shine,
That he will please, for Jesus’ sake,
To make them light up mine.”

Oh, blessed childhood, thee ’t is given
To speak the praise of God,
And lead from sinning up to heaven,
He tells us in his Word.

Lord, may my eyes so shine with love,
With love for God and men,
That others learn to look above,
And go where I have been.

And through these windows of my soul
May God himself look out,
With heart and will in his control,
All purified from doubt.

The Bird.

A LITTLE bird with broken wing
Dropped helpless in my path to-day ;
I gently took it, wondering
Why this bright life should ebb away
In weariness and suffering.

“ Why did it live at all,” I said,
“ Since life for it has been in vain ?
Just once its joyful wings to spread—
One thrilling song, one happy strain—
Then silence and the helpless dread.

“ Why, why ?” I asked. A voice replied,
“ It was enough one song to trill.
Can you presume, in human pride,
To doubt the wisdom of His will
Or question if His love be wide ?

“ The song sank in a human heart
Long closed to all that’s good and right ;
Its sweetness touched with magic art,
And woke to life again its blight:
Again the buds of promise start.”

The songster with its simple lay
Has wrought where human skill despaired ;
And for the sparrow's little day
Our Father in his mercy cared ;
Life gave he it, and took away.

As day by day his plan reveals,
We grow in reverence and trust ;
Each praising voice some truth unseals,
And all his creatures of the dust
Tell with what tenderness he deals.

Climbing.

SUCH fancies weave their colors through
The simplest acts of daily life,
That common places bring to view
Some thought with hidden memory rife ;
So oldest things are ever new.

And so to-day, when entering,
As day by day I've done before,
A tenement, I could not bring
At first my eyes to see a door
Or floor or stairs or anything,

For darkness ; came a thought so sweet
And clear, it cheered my upward way,
Feeling a pathway for my feet,
Up, up, till slowly light of day
Sifted, then poured down at my feet.

How like the Christian's life, I thought,
Begun in doubt, distrust, and gloom,
Seeing no path and knowing naught
But "climbing to an upper room,"
Trusting the "all things good " be wrought.

The promise says you need not stay
Enveloped in a doubtful night;
For each and all there is a way
To climb up to God's precious light;
Ask, and he will not say you nay.

Our Place.

"AND MY PEOPLE SHALL DWELL IN A PEACEABLE HABITATION AND IN SURE DWELLINGS, AND IN QUIET RESTING-PLACES."—ISA. 32:18.

HOW oft we pray for work, for helpful things
That gladden hearts anew—lift up, perchance;
For e'en a word its gleam of sunshine brings,
And power to bless is carried in a glance.

I'm glad 't is so. The tender Father-heart
That knows our yearning to reveal our love,
Just lets the weakness serve him, though our part,
That seems a hindrance, but his mercies prove.

The heart aglow with love must needs express
Its fullest meaning—and the world is wide;
But most I thank my God for blessedness
He gives when sweetly trusting by his side.

So, when the day is past and once again
Labor is changed to quiet, strife to rest,
I love to lose the heart-ache and the pain
In leaning all my weight upon his breast.

For we who are his own, his heart's delight,
May dwell between his shoulders—blessed home!
We cannot doubt him there or question right;
The old unrest, the burdens, cannot come.

And so the love that drew us draws us on
To "quietness" and "calm assurance" sweet,
Secure in this "sure dwelling," he alone
To keep, to guard, to guide the faltering feet.

So closer still we come, our blest abode
In "quiet resting-places," listening till
Our whispered "Master!" brings the answering
word,
His "secret" and the leading of his will.

From the Heart.

THE good of life is best displayed
To whom this tardy truth reveals:
That deepest woe is lighter made
By adding woe another feels.

And every time we grow akin
To hearts that beat some sorrowing tale,
Brighter will glow the peace within,
And thinner seems the mystic veil.

We find it hard to keep the smile
Upon our lips alway, or make
The hand-clasp cordial all the while,
Or speak sincerely, for His sake.

What does it matter if here and there
The shadows fall a little space,
Or if one hour has been less fair,
Or if we lose a while a face?

Canst not be brave and give no sign?
Ay, lose thy wrong in others' wrong;
Thou must not mar the fair design
He meant for thee; be true and strong,

Not brood in silence; cast aside
The memory of that old-time sting,
For calm is sorrow sanctified,
And peace is born of suffering.

So let us live, forgetting all
But that for us the world hath need;
And may God's smiles that on us fall
Be kept to heal the hearts that bleed.

So let us live that doubt be brushed,
Like filmy cobwebs, from our way,
And all our selfish thought be hushed
In duties of each present day!

Keeping, amid the worst of life,
The song of birds and sheen of dew;
Seeing, amid the clouds of strife,
The bars of sunlight sifting through;

Saying at last, with fearless heart,
"It has been well—my life was best ;
I'm glad to stay or to depart,
To work a while or go to rest."

Harmony.

SO oft we listen, fondly dreaming
Of songs unsung or words once said,
But fail to catch the tender meaning
Thrilled through the Present's golden thread.

Ah, deaf and blind, and slow to say
The truth that Time reveals to all :
We spent in dreams the fairest day,
And missed the music best of all.

Why must we spoil our lives in guessing
O'er things we never come to know,
And fail to reach the highest blessing
That God would on his loved bestow ?

Look at that star in heaven shining ;
You note it, for it stands alone ;
So every act of God's designing
A separate radiance has shown.

We know not how nor why nor whither ;
Enough to feel and not to know,
To lift our full hearts to the Giver,
And trust him all the way we go.

And if on different ways, oh, never
Forget the unity of heart ;
For Christ has bound our souls for ever ,
We cannot from his love depart.

And so these trifles that divide us
Shall melt before our greater faith—
That Jesus walks the road beside us,
And all that 's given him each hath.

Retrospect.

(TO A FRIEND.)

A COMMON question, friend, you ask—
If I have ever longed to turn
From present duties, bright or stern,
To old-time joys and fires that burn
Where memory can her fancies bask.

And yet my very heart stands still !
You touched some hidden spring, and lo,
The soft, faint winds of summer blow
Upon a child at play ; I know
No happier has been or will.

How fast the pictures come and go !
The loveliness of hill and wood,
The meadow-land with blossoms strewed,
The misty line of mountains, wooed
By clouds as fair and white as snow ;

The day is fading in the west,
And through an open door I see
Two children at their mother's knee,
Lisping their prayers sleepily
Before they lay them down to rest.

A brooding silence falls: how dear
The blessed calm of eventide.
But hark! a gentle touch has tried
The organ keys, and now "Abide
With Me," falls softly on the ear.

One child smiles calmly in her sleep;
The other, tossing on the bed,
Listens, with throbbing heart and head,
By new emotions strangely led
To burning thoughts and longings deep.

The melodies of heavenly choirs
Seem blending with the common song,
And through the tumult thoughts that throng
One note is echoed clear and strong;

A psalm of peace and love inspires.
How many times, when sad or tired,
The beauty of that twilight hour,
The thrilling of the music's power,
A fragrance as from some wild flower,
Sweeps over me with memory's tide.

Oh, if—nay, nay; we must not speak,
I dare not. Hush the questioning cry!
Our Father knows, and you and I
Close, close within His arms may lie
Because we are so worn and weak.

And so I would not sing you now
A song of tears; I fold the past
Into the Hand that holds me fast,
Mistakes and all—He knows—at last,
When I awake, I too shall know.

The Best Day.

O LIFE, hold up thy treasures one by one,
And tell me, as in memory's crown they shine,
Of all the days with which thy years were blest,
Which, as thou turnest them o'er, seems to thee best

Was it that day when love's exultant thrill
Dethroned all other thought—imprisoned will?
Nay, for a tremulous doubt, a haunting fear,
Dwelt e'en in that bright atmosphere.

Was it the time—oh, idle questioning!
When Fortune brought her hollow offering?
Or bland Success her cup of bittersweet?
Or Fame the laurel spread beneath thy feet?

Nay, nay; they're all the same. My mind goes back
With lingering fondness to the selfsame track:
A common day, with common duties spread,
And night a quiet benediction shed.

But I remember how the household cares
Seemed like so many answers to my prayers,
And for each patient stitch a gracious thought
Made homely work seem with rich jewels wrought.

The southern wind played 'round me, and the scent
Of fruit and flowers and songs of birds were blent ;
The peace that passeth knowledge clothed my brow ;
Oh, that I knew its blessed fulness now !

And often since, when all my days are filled
With anxious thought of hopes and dreams I've
willed,

I turn again unto that day of calm,
And in its simple beauty find a balm.

We pray for fame and honor, wealth and ease,
With much mistaken faith ; on humble knees
Let us to-night pray that some common day
May smile upon us in that sweet old way.

The time of power, the transient reign of pride,
Pass on and leave the heart unsatisfied :
But on the common day, with God to bless,
We find the long-sought-after happiness.

A Memory.

A FADED flower—that was all—
Pressed 'tween the time-stained leaves,
How swiftly doth my mind recall
The fragrance memory gives.

The years fly back, I gaze confused ;
'Mid childhood's happy hours
I kneel again, as oft I used,
And pluck the bank-grown flowers.

Below my feet the streamlet glides
With lulling, rhythmic flow,
Widening to press where, on its sides,
The dainty blossoms grow.

O Innocence! thy heaven-blue flowers
Waft perfume faint and rare,
Despite the absence and the years,
Upon this soft May air.

Many a day like this in May
Long years a-past I've spent
Filling my hands, in meadows gay,
In childhood's sweet content.

Ah, tall the grass grew by the bridge,
Sweet did the clover smell,
The checkerberries on the ridge,
Too, I remember well.

The "checkered adder's" swaying cup
Lifts high its golden head
To catch the rain and night dew sup,
And shield the violet's bed.

Vivid the picture comes I love,
Of hill and pasture gray;
It comes like manna from above,
Like manna goes away.

And thou, dear flower, art all I have
To link me to the past;
Still may the fragrance that you gave,
Lingering, ever last.

O azure blossom, pure and sweet,
Innocence, rightly given,
Thy tiny faces, as 't were meet,
Speak to us words from heaven.

Sweetest of all, thou floweret dear,
May thy humility
Teach us to learn these three while here,
Faith, hope, and charity!

Failure.

HOW many times a purpose grand
Takes hold upon our inner life,
And, for the time, unselfish hands
We nobly offer in earth's strife;
But soon some base, ignoble sin
Comes creeping in.

A heaven-sent thought lights up anew
The doubt-beclouded way we tread,
And with uplifted eyes we view
The answer to a prayer we said;
But lo! our footsteps slip anon—
The light is gone.

“To do, to bear, to suffer all”—
How bravely say we it to-day!
But when the burdens on us fall,
And e'en the tasks for which we pray,
Our human weariness we plead,
And lose the meed.

Love! 'T is a precious thing; it lifts
Us from our earthly, sordid plane,
And through our ministry and gifts
A purer happiness we gain;
But ah! how many times we grieve
The ones we love!

We want to help; on bended knees
We ask that pounds instead of pence
May, in the ways the Father please,
Be ours to use and to dispense;
But pennies, like the Gideon host
Can conquer most.

His service! Oh! if we could see
How every act and word and thought
Is telling in eternity
The character of what we've wrought,
We'd cry, "Each minute we'll await
And consecrate!"

Compensation.

IF all our past before us lay—
Each year and month and week and day—
How would the good and evil weigh?
For actions speak beyond the deed,
And every thought has been a seed,
And words bring back to us our meed.

Would we permit our friends to view
Those tangled weeds and thorns and rue,
Questioning sadly why they grew?

Would we be satisfied to scan
Our warped perversion of the plan
That God has laid out for each man?

Rather, with agonizing pain,
We'd cry, "Oh, to go back again!"
Bitterly adding, "All in vain."
If all our past before us lay—
Each year and month and week and day—
How would our joy and sorrow weigh?

Often we grieve and oft repine,
Thinking, "No lot so hard as mine,
I never drank life's sweetest wine;
The best, the choicest gifts are sent
To him to whom much goods are lent,
And nothing good for me was meant!

"E'en all I had He took away,
And left me desolate, to stray
Along a dark and stormy way."
Well, let our musings backward drift,
And carefully from memory sift
Our blessings and the common gift.

Lo! overwhelmed with shamed surprise.
We scarcely dare to lift our eyes,
Knowing our mercies reach the skies;

The trifling griefs that fret us so
Have shrunk, until we hardly know
What 't was we grieved for long ago.

How wise His plans! He never takes
Aught from us but for our own sakes;
Thus room for better things he makes.
They matter not—his means and ways—
God's loving mercy far outweighs
Our weak endeavors or our praise.

There's No Place Far But Heaven.

WE sat in friendly converse sweet,
Our talk with memory's scenes replete;
The drapery rustled o'er the head
And fancies woke we long thought dead,
Visions that quickly fled.

To other days and other place
Each turned her journey-wearied face,
Told who was changing, who were wed,
What news she learned and what she read—
But spoke naught of the dead.

(Still ever-varying shadows fall
Upon the portrait on the wall;
And well I knew the dark lines fell
Upon my dear friend's heart as well—
We sat as in a spell.)

Anon we dwelt on nearer themes—
The dear forms present in our dreams ;
The bird late flown from out her nest,
The fair young niece with true love blessed,
Homekeepers in the West.

“ Ah, lonely must you be, I ween,
With many dreary miles between ;
'T is true our age has grown so fast
The distance can be quickly passed,
But time will never last.”

She shook her head, a rare smile broke
Upon her sweet face ere she spoke ;
She raised her head, her eyes seemed riven
Upon the picture, shadow driven—
“ No place seems far but heaven.”

And then the soft eyes filled with tears
Of wistful longing, misty fears,
She dropped them on my awe-struck face
Lit with a sort of shining grace—
“ No place seems far—no place.”

The sorrowing face doth haunt me yet,
A vision I can ne'er forget.
Surely, the grief with which she's striven,
The faith she holds while tempest-driven,
Should bring her near to heaven.

Poor weary soul ! in patience wait
The opening of the golden gate.

O noble friend ! content thee, even
In knowing one day 't will be given
Thee to be nearest heaven.

Winter.

VALLEY and hillside stretching bare
And desolate beyond the sight,
Frost-burdened ground and icy air,
A sense of final loss and blight ;
The woodland stripped and naked stands,
Shivering beneath the northern blast,
Its mute, appealing, upstretched hands
Like ghosts', that beckon up our past !

A silence broods o'er all, so deep,
A fluttering leaf, a crackling bough,
Are all that break the tranquil sleep
Of loneliness of nature now.
The sky, prophetic of the storm,
Hangs low its heavy clouds of dun,
That, gathered in gigantic form,
Blot out from view the southern sun.

Ah, look ! the mystery's past ; they come
With clinging touch and noiseless wings,
The angels of the cloudlands, dumb,
Yet speaking strange and blessed things ;

Beating against our hearts their truth,
Tapping it on the window pane,
Freeing our thoughts from wrong and ruth,
Flooding our lives with peace again !

Now winter 's in her best estate,
Peopled with angels, pure and white,
That, opening through the skies a gate,
Have flooded all the world with light.
God grant that when our winter falls
Upon us, keen with icy breath,
And all around us hang the palls
That screen us from the face of Death,

We need not wait the call unblessed ;
But, breaking through the lowering skies,
May angels leave their home of rest
To light us to fair Paradise !
And when at last we calmly sleep,
I think we will be glad to know
That we are covered, warm and deep,
With airy wreaths of purest snow.



Sorrow Answered.

“NEVER again, oh, never again !”
How hard it seems, on lips so white,
To stay the mournful cry we fain
Would utter in our own heart's right !

"How can I be content and know
That other lives are with blessings filled?
You ask me still to trust, although
Not e'en my saddest cries are stilled;

"My future holds no day so fair,
No treasure like the one I lost—
The trees and flowers and very air
Seem blighted with the breath of frost.

"All friendly cheer I thrust aside—
No, no; you cannot know my heart.
To say, 'Be glad,' is but to chide;
Henceforth my life must be apart."

Nay, friend; God's wisdom never cast
Such morbid shadows on the way,
For other faithful hopes thou hast,
And many, many a happy day.

The little flower that droops and dies
When autumn comes with breath so chill,
With seed the waiting ground supplies,
And in the springtime bloometh still.

Had not the blossom been that died,
No power had been to spring anew;
So 't is in hearts with sorrow tried,
And, after winter, come to view

The flowers of hope, that rise above
The graves of old desire, unblessed;
And, in the summer warmth of love,
We know that we could never rest

In such assurance of our joy
Had we not known what sorrow meant,
Were not the gold mixed with alloy,
Or were not grief and pleasure blent.

Autumn must come, and winter—yes!
To make the fragrant springtime dear.
So we must wait for blessedness
Through nights of pain and days most drear.

The little lessons of the years
Combine to teach the one great thought—
We must surrender all our fears,
Give up our spirits to be taught

The will of God. He always gives
Reply to faith. The joy we miss
Through all the dreary winter lives,
And springs up, new-born happiness.

If We Had Known.

’T IS pleasant, ’mid the winter’s blast,
To feel the touch
Of some warm sunbeam from the past
We love so much,
Listening for ever to the undertone
Of human life, “Perhaps, if we had known!”

With zeal akin to Catholic devout
 We count our beads
Of good and evil days, laid out,
 Each with its meeds,
And ever, when the evening shades begin,
Some memory haunts ; we say, " It might have
 been."

If we had known the glaring light
 Of summer sun
Betokened storm before the night,
 Swift coming on,
We would have been in readiness to meet
The wreck of hopes that floated to our feet.

We wonder what we ought to say
 Or leave unsaid,
What course is best to take. We pray,
 " Let us be led ;"
But when life's plan has to fruition grown,
We look it through askance—if we had known !

Blind, blind ! our graves are covered o'er
 With flowers and tears ;
We mourn because we loved no more
 In other years ;
And living hearts their burdens bear alone,
Because the dead hear not, " If we had known."

O great and loving heart of God
 That bleeds for all !
How wilfully we choose our road,
 Nor heed thy call ;

How often disobey, and then atone,
By coming back ashamed—if we had known!

For the Master's Use.

LOW the message came, "He waiteth
For a token from thy hand;
Something hast thou that he needeth.
Wilt thou heed his blest command?"
But I lifted eyes of wonder,
For I could not understand.

Wealth I gave and costly presents,
Anxious tears my eyelids wet;
But the peace of heavenly blessing
Was withholden from me yet;
And the shadow of my wonder
Filled my days with sad regret.

But I sang the song, remembered,
That had thrilled my inner life,
Though the echoes that responded
With my music seemed at strife;
And the world, unheeding, round me
With rich melody was rife.

Then I sought a broader mission,
Gave my time to duty's call;
But I heard the same low whisper,
"Still thou hast not given all,
And thou must not shrink nor murmur
Be the loss or great or small."

Then I cried, "O Lord, I pray thee
Tell me what is in thy heart!
If with time or wealth or talent
I can serve thee, bless my art;
I am ready from all treasures,
Now and evermore, to part."

At my word the Master touched me,
Plucked a lily from my breast
That had lain there, loved and loving,
Through the years I called the best,
That he might transplant its beauty
In the gardens of the blest.

Oh, I never knew he envied
Me the fragrance of this flower!
But he took it from my bosom
In my life's triumphant hour,
And I trembled in the presence
Of a mighty, higher Power.

But I know my darling bloometh
In the gardens of the King;
That a beauty, never fading,
Clothes her, never withering—
And my nights that fall in silence
Joy and glory nearer bring.

So I let a fragrant memory
Sweeten all my days with good;
Though I cannot call her to me
(And I would not if I could),
Yet I'll go myself to meet her
Where all things are understood.

Crowded Out.

OF all the griefs which cross our way—
Regret, misfortune, care, or doubt—
Naught gives us keener pain to-day
Than self-accusing memory
Of things we meant to do—left out.

Too rapidly the time slips by,
And oh, we have so much to do !
Our plans are piled up mountain high ;
But when we look back, by-and-by,
We find we are not half way through.

Is it because we dream too much ?
Or are our pathways hedged about
With duties heavy for our touch ?
Perhaps we wonder over much,
And something must be crowded out.

Sometimes it is the dearest thing—
Oh, how we long to leave the rest !
But all the days new duties bring,
And, heartsick, to our faith we cling
That since 't is crowded out, 't is best.

O aching heart, be brave a while ;
God sees your weariness and doubt,
And in that land you 'll reach erewhile,
Where all grows plain beneath His smile,
Nothing is ever crowded out.

A Picture.

A PICTURE comes athwart my dreams—
A low-ceiled room and broken beams
Of moonlight shapen over all;
Without, the solemn calm of night
Sleeps in the valley, on the height,
Watched over by the tree-tops tall.

Within, a young girl sits alone;
With gentle touch and softened tone
She plays and sings a dear old hymn;
And, as she sings, an age-bent form
Creeps through the moonbeams' silvery storm
And sits down in the twilight dim;

While sound of crutches on the floor
Tells of one waiting at the door,
Attentive to the voice within.
The voice rings out, "Nearer to-day,
I'm nearer, nearer home to-day
Than e'er before I've been."

The moonlight, glancing on the wall,
In tender touches seems to fall
Upon the bowed and trembling head;
"Nearer, perhaps, than now I know,"
The song goes on, and soft and low
The words are by another said.

"Be near me when my feet would slip
Upon the brink of death"—a lip

Is quivering now, and teardrops fall;
A hush steals through the little room,
And fervent prayer has lit the gloom;
Peace spreads her pinions over all.

Another Sabbath twilight comes
And casts its shadow through the rooms—
The rooms so empty evermore.
Again the player comes, but oh,
No silent form its head bends low,
None linger at the open door.

Only a week ago; ah, me!
To-day they 're in eternity,
Singing the glad redemption song;
And though our hearts are full of pain,
We would not wish them back again—
Just gone ahead—we 'll go erelong.

Coming Back.

“COMING back!” The words are tingling
In every vein a glow;
Memory brings us voices, mingling
With the scenes of long ago.
Brothers, sisters, just a-parting
From the old home, each from each,
Bravely, while the tears are starting,
Stop to say, in broken speech,
“Coming back!”

Did they ? Oh, no ; one is sleeping
In an unknown soldier's grave ;
And their watch the stars are keeping
Over one beneath the wave ;
Hush ! one name is never spoken,
And our hearts are bleeding yet ;
But the rest, with kindly token,
Write the words we ne'er forget :
" Coming back."

So in life ; whene'er we're parted
From our present joys and fears,
On we press, still hopeful-hearted,
Plan to come back with the years.
Do we ? Oh ! the memories never
Cease their surging through the brain,
For we do not say, " For ever ;"
But, when present hopes are vain,
" Coming back."

When in quiet evening sitting
How it all grows plain and clear !
Hopes and plans are phantoms flitting ;
Duty's voice we list to hear ;
Empty seems our past ambition,
All our cherished dreams are vain.
Evening is the great magician ;
Darkness shows us light again
Coming back.

Oh, the stray lambs, wounded, bleeding—
How He longs to bring them in!
On the mountains hear Him pleading!
See, his love has cleansed their sin!
Sinners, gray-haired, bitter, hardened—
Listen, all; he bids you come!
Come! let all your guilt be pardoned:
Send, through prayer, the message home—
“Coming back.”

God is good; and way up yonder,
When we stand and watch and wait,
May the souls we love, who wander
Here, be brought to mercy's gate;
And in bursts of music glorious
Nations all their voices blend
In an anthem grand, victorious,
And in songs that never end.
Home at last!

Why?

I SAT alone in my sorrow,
Alone in my bitter thought,
Seeing no bright to-morrow,
And scarcely caring aught
Whether I lived or perished—
For time and sense were naught.

“ For what have I left but moaning?
And ‘ God, why is it so?’
For I’ve done with hoping and owning,
And only wait to go
Past all the darksome shadows
Into eternal glow.

“ For what is the woman’s choosing
But to suffer and be still!
To suffer in winning and losing,
Reluctantly to fill
The cup of joy for others—
To bear through good and ill.

“ If I could hide in the cover
Of some sun-favored spot,
And let the warmth creep over
My grief-chilled heart, I wot
It would to new life quicken—
The older life forgot.”

But oh! I came so near him,
So near the Master’s feet,
I could not doubt or fear him,
I dared not ask, “ Is it meet?”
And in that moment’s silence
I felt that grief was sweet.

And so I stayed no longer
To wonder why and how;
Because I know that stronger

And happier am I now,
Because the heavy burden
Has taught my soul to bow.

What matter if a word astray
Be with some ill endued?
What matter if a message, pray,
Be read and misconstrued?
What matter if our sins to-day
By all the world be viewed?

Man, I defy thy scorning,
Where God has said, "Be healed!"
My life begins each morning,
And all the past is sealed—
A secret with my Father,
To judgers unrevealed.

Waiting.

LIFE is made up all in waiting;
Waiting for the rain to fall,
For the time of songsters' mating,
For the cricket's cheery call,
For the night dropped over all!

All the little cares and duties
Making up the common day
Centre round the fancied beauties
Of a sometime far away,
Where life's brightest sunbeams play.

And each day is much the sweeter
For a blessing farther on,
And our happiness completer
When we live not now alone,
But in futures, all unknown.

All our ventures and our dreaming
Launch we on life's ship for freight.
Hopes ambitious there are teeming,
And—ah, bitterly we wait
Till they reach the port of Fate!

Waiting (oh, the anguish of it!)
For the passion storm to cease;
Or, when torn with pride above it,
Praying for our will's release,
Waiting for the whisper, "Peace!"

Waiting while our hearts are breaking,
But our dearest never know;
Ah, the baby fingers, waking
Dreams that in our bosoms glow,
Hopes we buried long ago!

Some time, when our life's grand mission
Shall before Him lie complete,
In the dawn of faith's fruition
We shall walk with faltering feet
Where eternal billows beat.

And, at last, the struggle over
And our spirits free, but dumb,
We shall find across the river,

When to heaven's shores we come,
Those who wait to "Welcome Home."

"Master, Say On."

THAT old rebuke comes to my mind to-day,
Spoke by the Master for unuttered doubt :
"Simon, to thee I have somewhat to say,
A parable for thee to follow out."

"Master, say on." We almost wonder how
The Pharisee could speak for very awe ;
So many times we wait in silence now
Until we hear the utterance of His law.

To us there comes at morning, noon, and night
A message from the voice we love to hear ;
Sometimes in some exultant burst of light,
Sometimes it echoes on a pathway drear ;

Sometimes through sickness or through pain or
ill,
Perchance when eyes are full of hopeless tears;
Some way divine to lead us to His will—
A lesson of a day or months or years.

And do we always heed? The stubborn will
Refuses oft to hear the gentle "Child,
It is thy loving Lord that speaks; be still;"
And go our way unblessed, unreconciled.

Listen ! He speaks to-day ; He has a thought
For every moment of our lives to be ;
Oh ! bend thine ear, it shall not be for naught,
A tender, gentle whisper, " Follow Me."

Sometimes we hear and wait in vain
To learn what further word is meant, nor guess
He waiteth for the quiet, " Lord, say on,"
Before our anxious spirits He can bless.

Master, say on ; our souls are not afraid ;
Close, close we put our hands in thine and press
Upon that heart whose dear life-blood was made
A ransom for a world of wretchedness !

Say on, how hard soe'er the test, say on ;
The world has nothing, nothing half so sweet ;
Help us to sing the victor's joyous song
And leave our service at thy nail-pierced feet.

Hindered.

IT seemed so hard, when years had passed
Just waiting for an " open door,"
That, when it opened to the vast,
Grand service, growing more and more,
I then should find my path reset,
And hear, " Be patient, child ; not yet."

Hard, yet erewhile I knelt and prayed,
 " Yes, Lord, the lesson fully teach ;
Show me to-day what work is laid
 Along this pathway in my reach,
And, great or small, I still shall find
Thy blessing in a willing mind."

Yet not enough. He hedged me in
 Till friend and foe seemed like afar.
I struggled with the doubts within,
 But wondered at each hindering bar.
Still, when I fretted, eyelids wet,
The whisper came again, " Not yet."

And when I prayed him, " Make it plain,
 That I may all the days prove true,"
Quick came to mind the little train—
 The twelve—who with their Lord withdrew
Into a desert place, and there
Found rest in silence, strength in prayer.

Perchance some questioned o'er the need,
 Some asked, " Why in this lonely place,
So many hungry hearts to feed,
 So many longing for his face?"
I know not, yet perchance one cried,
" My heart is here unsatisfied."

Yet, oh, the blessing ! there alone
 With him who was their Lord and Christ ;
What rest was in his every tone ;
 His presence for their joy sufficed ;

And in the sweetness of his will
Their hearts grew hushed and calmly still.

Somewhere along the life of each
There lies, methinks, the Desert Place,
Where through the silence comes his speech
And where we see him face to face.
There—there the restless longings cease,
And all our being fills with peace.

Then, oh, we know his way is best,
We know his hand has drawn apart
The weary soul to give it rest,
To mould his patterns in the heart.
So in the desert with our Lord
We learn to trust his every word.



Unattained.

HOW darkly blue the quiet moonlit sky!
Its beauty filled my soul with ecstasy;
Unconsciously I tried to grasp a star.
Alas, how far!

A perfect day and golden sunlight spread
Like countless blessings all about my head,
Only one mar upon this lovely scene—
A "might have been."

When idly mixing with the crowd, one day,
A kindred spirit came along that way.
Oh, rapture ! joy ! but ere my soul could cry,
He passed me by.

God sends us heaven sometimes. I touched a hand
Which did a thrill divine throughout me send ;
But when again I blindly clutched the air,
No hand was there.

I had a friend whose every glance was strength ;
I walked on by her side a little length,
Then turned aside to pluck a tiny flower
And found her nevermore.

I stood beside the sea ; the onward whirl
Bore on its crest a single glistening pearl ;
But when I stooped to where it landed lay,
'T was washed away.

I cast my all into a handsome bark,
And gayly pushed into the stream at dark ;
But ah ! my hopes were wrecked ere night was o'er,
Close by the shore.

Then, standing by the rock where sank my pride,
By man forsook, I feared by God denied,
" Shall I, O Lord," cried I, by misery driven,
" Just miss of heaven ?"

Then through the parted clouds I caught a gleam,
'T was over in a flash, just like a dream,
But I knew then and since, through love divine,
That heaven was mine.

The Old Home.

I STOOD beside the sea to-day
And watched the breakers coming in,
Laden with sandy weeds and spray,
With roar above the city's din.

A flock of swift-winged seagulls flew
In circles high above the beach,
And through my mind there flashed anew
The memory of an oft-heard speech:

“The highway bird sings but the song
It learned within the mother's nest;
Though far it flies from home, and long,
Yet always is the old song best.”

So 't is with man. Seas may divide
His last years from his childhood days,
But ever in all hearts abide
The old-time words and old-time ways.

The rush of time can ne'er efface,
And sin can never wholly blight,
The memory of our childhood's grace,
The glimmering of a far-off light.

Life's bitter sting, distracting cares—
The hope that vain before us lies—
Are but a dream, where, on the air,
Seem borne our mother's lullabies.

It makes the present sweet and blest,
It saves us, when temptations come,
To call back days that seemed the best,
And linger near our early home.

We thank thee, Lord, thy mercy sweet
Has lighted here and there our past;
But brightest glow, and most complete,
The childhood scenes on memory cast.

The Face.

IT haunts me all the winter night,
That cold face peering from the mist;
I saw it by the dim lamplight
That falls upon the bridge. And list

Was that a sigh, and came it too
From quivering lips that dared not speak?
I wonder why I never knew
Till after—but the night was bleak;

I hurried past; and only when
I sat at home, my mind by chance
Went to the bridge, the face, and then
I saw it all in that one glance.

Too late! The tale is old to all;
"So busy," we forget to grieve,
Till in the twilight, on the wall,
Weird pictures form that shadows leave.

Scarcely a day of common things
But leaves some story in our hearts,
And evening, with its rest-time, brings
A face that out of darkness starts.

Our life is strangely mingled in
With joy and sorrow, sigh and song.
What puny hands to fight with sin!
What tired feet to tread out wrong!

We struggle blindly in the dark,
Fearing we know not how to go,
And often turning just to mark
How in the past we went, and so

We seldom grow into the rest
Awaiting those of perfect love;
And only when death seems the best
We wonder how and why we strove.

Lord, take the doubts and lay them by,
And fold us in thy tenderest love!
So shall thy fulness satisfy,
And we shall grow like those above.

The Blessing.

A WRETCHED attic, dark and cold,
Where straggling sunbeams wander through
The broken shutters—bands of gold—
Across a coffin brought to view.

But honest grief is there to-day,
And honest tears are falling fast ;
For one who sleepeth peacefully
The poverty and pain are past.

Go in—no matter if the wall
And floor are bare as bare can be ;
Look reverently upon it all,
A daughter of the King, you see,

Lies here in state. Look calmly in
Upon the wrinkled, peaceful face ;
The veil grows very, very thin
Between this and the heavenly place.

I would not give my peace away
For all the treasures you could bring ;
I look down on the dead and say,
“ The Lord hath wrought a wondrous thing.”

You did not see her hands, so weak,
Clasp in a last, half-uttered prayer,
Nor hear her lips a blessing seek
For her who taught the way “ up there ;”

For if you had, the room would glow
With light for you as well as me.
I thank God that he used me so,
And that one, in eternity,

Was saved, and through my service small—
Some verses from the blessed Word,
A prayer, with scarcely faith at all,
Beside the bed—but sweetly heard

And answered with a pardon, spoke
Unto a soul that longed for rest,
And so—she fell asleep and woke
Among the mansions of the blest.

Trust.

ONCE I thought to make my future
All of God's and none of mine,
Prayed with earnestness and fervor,
"Thrill it with the life divine;"
But I never thought of saying,
"Not my way, O Lord, but thine!"

So the plan of grand achievement,
"All for Christ," born in my thought,
Waited in uncertain dimness
With the ends for which I sought,
Till despairingly I murmured,
"Vainly serving—nothing wrought!"

I had hoped that greater service
Would my Saviour nearer bring,
And the pathway gleam with glory
From the presence of my King
When I did my whole known duty—
But I worked on, wondering.

Though I gave up ease and pleasure,
Still my heart, unsatisfied,
Cried out with the something lacking,

Something from the Lord denied!
And my soul was weary, hoping
In His fulness to abide.

Through discouragement and failure
Lovingly He taught me this:
That in self my work was fruitless,
That my hand must lie in his
While I waited all his bidding,
Trusting in his promises.

Then by waters still he led me,
And through pastures grand and fair
To the place where he would have me,
Gave me work and left me there;
'T was a new and strange unfolding
Of his love and grace and care.

One by one I saw them leave me—
Plans and hopes and oft-said prayers—
And a new life spread before me,
Full of peace but many cares,
Cares that multiplied to brighten
Up my pathway unawares.

Then I grew into the sweetness
Of abiding in the Lord;
Found in promises new meaning;
Simply took him at his word,
Hearing joyfully the message,
"All things are for you prepared."

Saying Prayers.

TWO little forms, on Christmas night,
 Amid the wreck of newest toys,
 Stood at their mother's knee, in white,
 Worn out with play and all its joys,
 And clasping hands so small and fair,
 Said, each in turn, her evening prayer.

Now Mabel, with a reverent face,
 "Our Father" lisps, then, "Jesus dear,
 I thank you for our Christmas plays,
 And 'cause your birthday's every year,
 And 'cause we all get presents then."
 She softly adds, "And, Lord, amen."

With down dropped lids o'er roguish eyes
 Now Baby Nell, her hands demure,
 Kneels down, while sleepily she tries,
 With looks as rapt and face as pure
 As angel's face, to think aright
 What 'tis she needs to say to-night,

Prays: "'Saviour, tender Shepherd,' had
 'A lamb whose fleece was white as snow,'
 And everywhere the Saviour went
 The little lamb was sure to go."
 A snow-white ball lies in a heap,
 And Baby Nell is fast asleep.

But mother-lips were smiling yet
While tenderly she raised the head,
And laid the precious household pet
Within her soft and dainty bed,
And lingered o'er the sleeping face
To put a straying curl in place.

“Yea, Lord, thou art our Shepherd mild,
And this is thine own lamb, so white;
I pray thee, keep my darling child,
And be it ever her delight
To follow thee, where'er she go;
So keep her heart as pure as snow.”

The New Year.

WHAT! shall I leave you here a space,
To hope and plan or nurse regret?
Nay, for the moments fly apace,
And there is much to strive for yet.

“And what about the past?” you ask.
Why, it was yours; I pray you tell,
Was it a half-neglected task?
Does memory say, “It was not well”?

Oh, there it stands, all soiled and marred,
That page so white a year ago;
How words and thoughts and deeds have scarred;
And blots are there from tears of woe!

Yet softly, for the past is ours,
To learn sad lessons from its stain,
To wear in memory still its flowers,
To reap the harvest of its pain.

The future! ah, it means so much;
Lord, teach us, for we little know,
And thrilled with courage by thy touch,
Help us in faith to onward go.

And fear we yet? Nay, not at all;
For perfect love must cast out fear.
Lord, we have heard thy loving call;
We'll follow, be it far or near.

So, leaning on the strength divine,
And taking for our need each day,
Our eye on thee, our will in thine,
We cannot doubt or lose our way.

Lord, set thy thought on us this year;
May we abide "beneath thy wing;"
And may our hearts and lives appear
A true and perfect offering.

The Sunbeam.

LOST years, come back! I see the child at play,
Building his castles grand and lofty towers,
Each in its turn fast tumbling to decay
And giving place to plans of later hours.

A sunbeam through a window creeps ; it falls
A tiny golden thread upon the floor ;
Our hero sees it touch his castle walls,
And thinks to build them better than before.

He tears them down—the turrets rise anew,
And underneath a window, framed with care,
Made for that single sunbeam to shine through
And grace the halls within with light so fair.

He works with haste, filled with the novel thought,
But when the castle's finished—all in vain !
The sunbeam has passed on, nor can be caught,
Though patiently he builds once and again.

How like to life ! We older children try
Some sunbeam to imprison, and we build
Our plans about it, finding by-and-by
That it has passed—and left our hearts unfilled.

We cannot stay the sunbeam nor the hour ;
The present is a single golden thread ;
But when we try to keep it in our power,
We find it gone: the sun has moved ahead.

Elusive ! fleeting ! 't is the old-time cry ;
No lasting joys, no treasure, we can hold ;
From childhood's play until the hour we die
How many phantoms in our arms we fold !

The sunbeam falls ahead. Thank God 't is so,
The shadow falls behind. So on we press,
Led by that distant, hope-inspiring glow
From transient toys to lasting blessedness.

The day will come, we cannot know how soon,
When we shall near the beam so far away,
And in the beauty of eternal noon
Find all we hope for, all for which we pray.

Sometime.

GOD'S love is infinite! Down here below
I cannot fathom all its grace;
But when I reach my heavenly home, I know
I'll see it shining in his face.

I do not always feel the tender arms
That draw me closely to his breast,
But when I leave life's toils and earth's alarms
For evermore my soul shall rest.

I sometimes lose his voice 'mid tempest's roar,
While tossing on an angry sea,
But well I know on yonder golden shore
I'll listen to it constantly.

Sometimes 't is dark. Night ever follows day
In this poor world of frequent change;
I smile to think in that eternal day
My soul shall ever fearless range.

Some days my soul seems borne on wings of light
To sweetest rapture, beyond speech,
Yet then I feel my happiness is slight
Compared to that sometime I'll reach.

We lean so much on love; and yet I find
That who seemed true may turn away;
That friendship can be fickle, can be blind;
And passion burns to ashes gray.

And so I learned to lean on tested love,
And choose Christ for my dearest friend,
And talk with him about our home above,
Where all my future I shall spend.

Yes; here 't is sudden change and doubt and pain,
And there it will be perfect joy;
Here sin and shame and tears that fall like rain,
There happiness without alloy.

Sometime! It ought to be a magic word
To rouse the strength that in us lies
And feast our fainting hearts, by hope deferred,
On hopes of blessed paradise.

“Come O'er the Threshold.”

WRETCHED and homeless, sick and cold,
A waif her weary wanderings kept;
In vain all day her tale she told,
In vain she plead, in vain she wept;
None pitied, and the night comes on;
No hope; but see, a door flung wide,
And words, the sweetest 'neath the sun,
“Come o'er the threshold,” from inside.

Oh, what a burst of joy and light !
What dreams of heaven and perfect bliss !
Who says the wanderer dwelt that night
Upon a world of woe like this ?
Henceforth the fires that brightly burned
Will hold their warmth within her soul ;
And hopes with radiant faces turned
The past to a forgotten scroll.

Perhaps some wanderer stands to-day
Out in the storm and night of sin ;
No hope, no pity, lights his way,
No home to find a shelter in ;
But while he waits a door wide swings,
Reveals a welcome, sweet and blest ;
And on the air this bidding rings,
" Come o'er the threshold, child, and rest."

O gracious Lord, we are so blind !
Touch thou our eyes, that we behold
The things unthought by human mind,
The glories that through faith unfold.
Help us to lead thy lambs astray
Up to that blessed, open door ;
And do thou in thy pity say,
" Come o'er the threshold ; sin no more."

And when the night of death has cast
Its shadows on our weary head,
Methinks 't will make the " home at last,"
— More blessed, if of us 't is said

By one who waits us at the door,
"She taught me of the love that 's given,
She pointed me to mercy's door;
'Come o'er the threshold into heaven.'"

His Leading.

And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. Mark 8:23.

AND I was blind and poor and wretched, too,
Begging for love and happiness,
Just getting crumbs of joy, sometimes a few
Scant crumbs of comfort in distress;
But still my heart, unsatisfied,
Craved light and peace the world denied.

And then the Saviour touched me. Oh, the thrill
Of that new life and health and peace!
My being merges into that dear will
And all the restless longings cease.
Then feeds my soul on Living Bread
And feasts on heavenly bounties spread.

And then, my hand still closely clasped in his—
That blessed hand, nail-pierced for me—
He gently led me from my wretchedness
And rescued from my misery;
And trusting in my loving Guide,
I walk in safety by his side.

I turn not back. How could I go alone?
I dare not go to left or right;
The Hand so strong and tender guides my own;
I cannot see; I trust me to his sight;
For he has been this way and knows
The pitfalls and the lurking foes.

I know not what the dangers I have passed,
Why this rough path was best for me,
And why so slow at times and then so fast
We journey. He knows perfectly,
And in his love and wisdom still
I rest so sweetly in his will.

I need not watch the gathering storm that breaks
In fury o'er my head, for see!
He who hath borne such burdens for our sakes,
With sheltering wing hath covered me.
Here will I trust and wait until
The tempest dies with, "Peace, be still."

I cannot know, I need not know to-day,
Whither that gentle hand will lead;
Perhaps from some with whom I long to stay,
Perhaps in quietness to feed
Beside the stream, in pastures green;
His will be always done—not mine.

And oh, I'm glad to know some day, some day,
When he has led me quite aside,
Those hands of power in blessing he will lay
Upon my eyes of sight denied,

And they will ope in glad surprise
Upon my Lord in paradise!

We Need Thee, Lord.

WE need thee, Lord, when in the morning's glow,
Filled with thy love, forth to the work we go;
We pray thee, let thy benediction fall
In grace on all;
Thy blessing on the words we speak, bestow!

We need thee, Lord, when sunset beams aslant,
We come home from our labor ministrant;
And may those hours of rest with peace be filled,
And ever stilled
The murmur or the doubt, however faint.

We need thee, Lord, when, our poor human sight
Fails to descry the distant beacon light;
Or when our lives, tossed on an angry sea,
Would turn to thee
And see thy face through faith, though not by sight.

We need thee, Lord, when in some silent hour
We struggle in our weakness and thy power;
Oh, may our wills so constantly be thine
That we entwine
Our every hope about thee evermore!

We need thee, Lord, when through the solemn air
Ascends from many lips the broken prayer—

Entreaty, praise, desire, and trustful faith ;

For thou hast said,

"Who unto me doth come need not despair."

We need thee, Lord ; we say it all day long ;

It mingles with our tears, our fears, our song ;

And e'en our latest breath shall be a prayer.

Oh, be thou there

To lead our feet from earth to heaven's throng.



"Will Ye Also Go Away?"

JOHN 6:67.

COME, ye! all on whom the blessing
Of the Lord's forgiveness fell,

Have you finished your professing?

Is there naught to-day to tell?

Have you wearied of the sweetness

And the richness of his grace?

Have you read the full completeness

Of the beauty in his face?

Hear the tender accents falling,

"I have led you day by day,

Given you a 'holy calling,'

'Will ye also go away?'"

Does your light, that burned so brightly,
Flicker in a colder love,
And the morning prayer and nightly
Fail to reach the throne above?
'Tis because the world's alluring
Would entice you from his side;
Come, his mercy now securing,
Trusting all, in him abide!
Listen, now his tones are falling—
"I have longed for you to-day;
While you lingered I was calling,
'Will ye also go away?'"

Mourner, with the cup of sorrow
Drained by lips that quiver still,
Trust him for the lonely morrow,
Yielding now unto his will.
All the lonely ones and careless,
Half persuaded to believe,
Let your hearts, grown cold and prayerless,
Of his wondrous love receive,
Christ is speaking, "Are you seeking
Knowledge of your Lord to-day?
Long I sought you, my blood bought you—
'Will ye also go away?'"

Do we hold our Christ most precious,
Is there naught from him withheld?
Still he stands with love so gracious
Who has all things else excelled!

Let no secret come to hinder,
Lose no message given, I pray ;
Once again, so grave and tender,
"Will ye also go away?"
Here we are, O Master, take us !
We will follow thee alway,
Thine to be what thou wouldst make us ;
We will never go away.

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